



For Immediate Release

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NEWS RELEASE

West Nile Virus Bird Testing Underway

Salt Lake City — The Division of Wildlife Resources announces the beginning of wild bird surveillance for West Nile virus in Utah. Wild bird surveillance began May 15, 2004 and will continue until October 15, 2004 as needed.

Wild birds are important indicators of West Nile viral activity in a given area and viral activity in birds is often detected before human illness. This early detection provides health officials another opportunity to inform people in newly infected areas of preventative measures they can take to protect themselves and horses. The division encourages the public to participate in this program. If you see an ill or dead bird in your area, please contact the Division of Wildlife Resources office nearest you (please see the list at the bottom of this release for contact information).

Target species for testing in 2004 include birds of the Corvid family (ravens, crows, jays, etc.), raptors and other discretionary species that may be exhibiting neurologic symptoms (examples include birds that can't fly or that appear disoriented and lethargic).

Please visit the division's Internet Web site (www.wildlife.utah.gov/wnv) for photos of the birds that will be tested this year.

It is important to note that not all birds may be suitable for testing. To determine if a bird is suitable for testing, please follow these guidelines:

- Is the bird a target species (raven, crow, jay or bird of prey. Also, does the bird appear to be ill or dying)?

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- Has the bird been dead less than 24 hours (evidence of decay would indicate the bird has been dead longer than 24 hours and is therefore not suitable for testing)?
- Is there no other obvious cause of death (window strike, cat-kill or collision with a vehicle)?

For those with access to the Internet, the Division of Wildlife Resources has provided an online submission form to make reporting dead birds more convenient. More information regarding wild bird surveillance, including a bird identification page and the online submission form, can be found at: www.wildlife.utah.gov/wnv

The Division of Wildlife Resources is working closely with other state and local agencies involved in West Nile virus surveillance and prevention, including the Utah Department of Health, the Utah Mosquito Abatement Association and the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food.

Since people may become infected with WNV through the bite of an infected mosquito, personal protection is key. West Nile virus can result in serious disease or death. It is important to follow these recommended guidelines:

- Protect from dusk to dawn. Mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus are most active during this time.
- Use DEET mosquito repellent according to label instructions.
- Make sure window screens and screened doors are in good repair. Small holes will allow mosquitoes to enter.
- Eliminate standing water around your home, such as old tires, cans, poorly kept swimming pools or any other source where stagnant water accumulates.
- Change water regularly (every two to three days) in birdbaths, outdoor pet dishes, etc.
- Aerate ornamental ponds or contact your local mosquito abatement district regarding treatment options.

For more information on personal protection and minimizing mosquitoes around your home, please visit: www.health.utah.gov

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Division of Wildlife Resources Regional Offices and WNV Contacts

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Northern Region (Cache, Rich, Box Elder, Weber, Morgan, Davis, Summit)
515 East 5300 South
Ogden, UT 84405
Phone: (801) 476-2740
Contact: Adam Kozlowski adamkozlowski@utah.gov

Northeastern Region (Uintah, Daggett, Duchesne)
152 East 100 North
Vernal, UT 84078
Phone: (435) 781-9453
Contact: Ron Stewart ronstewart@utah.gov

Central Region (Utah, Wasatch, Tooele, Juab, Sanpete, Salt Lake)
1115 North Main Street
Springville, UT 84663
Phone: (801) 491-5678
Contact: Steve Gray stevegray@utah.gov

Southeastern Region (Carbon, Emery, Grand, San Juan- also eastern Wayne
and Garfield)
475 West Price River Drive, Suite C
Price, UT 84501
Phone: (435) 636-0260 ext. 266
Contact: Brent Stettler brentstettler@utah.gov

Southern Region (Washington, Iron, Kane, Garfield, Beaver, Piute, Millard,
Wayne, Sevier)
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Cedar City, UT 84720
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